

# New Books from Israel • Fall 2019



 THE INSTITUTE FOR THE TRANSLATION OF HEBREW LITERATURE





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# NEW BOOKS FROM ISRAEL

Fall 2019

## CONTENTS

Zeruya Shalev, <i>Fate</i> .....	2
Sarit Yishai-Levi, <i>A Woman Beyond the Sea</i> .....	3
Yirmi Pinkus, <i>Bachelors and Widows</i> .....	4
Yirmi Pinkus, <i>Professor Fabrikant's Historical Cabaret</i> .....	5
Yirmi Pinkus, <i>Petty Business</i> .....	5
Michal Ben-Naftali, <i>A Dress of Fire</i> .....	6
Noga Albalach, <i>Esther and Adina</i> .....	7
Noga Albalach, <i>The Old Man</i> .....	7
Shifra Horn, <i>Daughters of Jerusalem</i> .....	8
Itamar Levy, <i>Until I Was Born</i> .....	9
Rina Ouziel-Blumenthal, <i>There Are Also Optometrists in Tel Aviv</i> .....	10

### NEW VOICES

Michal Sapir, <i>The Modern Dance</i> .....	11
Oren Gazit, <i>The First Ending, Then the Second</i> .....	12
Rachel Dana Fruchter, <i>The Printers</i> .....	13
Yael Shaham, <i>The Editor</i> .....	14
Elhanan Nir, <i>Just the Two of Us</i> .....	15

### POETRY

ITHL Special Project in French Translation.....	16
Tuvia Ruebner, <i>Still Before</i> .....	17
T. Carmi, <i>Monologues and Other Poems</i> .....	17
Sharon Hass, <i>Music of the Wide Lane</i> .....	18
Tali Latowicki, <i>The Right to Bodily Integrity</i> .....	18
Orin Rosner, <i>Wind Cubs</i> .....	18

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# Zeruya Shalev

## *Fate*

a novel

Ben Shemen, Keter Books, forthcoming. 250 pp.

**Zeruya Shalev** was born at Kibbutz Kinneret. She has an MA in Biblical studies and works as a literary editor. Shalev has written novels, poetry and two children's books. *Love Life*, *Husband and Wife* and *Thera* were bestsellers in several countries. *Love Life* is also included in *Der Spiegel's* prestigious list of "20 Best Novels in World Literature over the Past 40 Years." *Husband and Wife* was included in the French FNAC list of "200 Best Books of the Decade." And *The Remains of Love* was featured in *The Independent's* "Books of the Year in Translation" for 2013.

Shalev has received the Book Publishers Association's Gold and Platinum Prizes, the Corine Prize (Germany, 2001), the Amphi Award (France, 2003), the ACUM Award (1997, 2003, 2005), the French Wizo Prize (2007), the Rome-Jerusalem Prize (2014), the Prix Fémina (France, 2014) and the ADEI-WIZO Prize (Italy, 2017). Her books have been published abroad in 27 languages, among which: English (**Grove/Atlantic**, **Canongate**, **Bloomsbury**, **The Other Press**), French (**Gallimard**, **Folio**), German (**Berlin Verlag**, **Berliner Taschenbuch**, **Spiegel**), Italian (**Frassinelli**, **Mondolibri**), Spanish (**Galaxia Gutenberg**, **Siruela**), Polish (**WAB**), Dutch (**Vassalucci**, **Cossee**), Greek (**Patakis**), Turkish (**Dogan**), Japanese (**Fuso**), Chinese (**People's Literature**), Vietnamese (**Bach Viet**), Korean (**Prunsoop**), Portuguese (**Elsinor** 2020).

**T**he much-awaited novel by the author who has won acclaim across the globe!

After the death of her father, a renowned scientist, Atara tracks down the woman he was married to in his youth and who fought beside him in an underground Jewish militia before the establishment of the State of Israel. The meeting between the two women sets off a dramatic series of events that changes the course of Atara and her family's lives. The narrative alternates between the minds of the two women. Rachel, the former wife, is now an elderly but clear-minded widow who misses the passion of the old days; she is worried about the country she fought for, and the one that the next generation will inherit. Atara is a conservation architect, married for the second time, the mother of two children. She struggles with problems in her marriage as well as a crisis with her son, a soldier in the naval commandos. The gradual disclosure of the past sheds light on the present and forces the characters to face questions of fate, control and responsibility, disillusionment and love.

Foreign rights sold: German, **Berlin Verlag/Piper**, Berlin; French, **Gallimard**, Paris; Polish, **Foksal**, Warsaw.

No reviews available yet.  
For Shalev's previous novel, *Pain*:

An immense novel.

**Author Leila Slimani**

Shalev's writing manages to grasp everything... [a novel of] impressive power.

**Le Monde**

A captivating novel, between suffering and grace.

**Elle**

From the great Israeli writer, a novel that searches through the cracks in our souls.

**La Repubblica**

A magnificent book...full of irony.

**Corriere della Sera**

Shalev's fifth novel...and her best so far.

**Der Spiegel**

Shalev's finest novel since *Love Life*.

**Süddeutschen Zeitung**



PHOTO © ITZIK SHOKEL

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BESTSELLER



## *A Woman Beyond the Sea*

a novel

Ben Shemen, Modan, 2019. 470 pp.

**A** new novel by the author of the huge bestseller *The Beauty Queen of Jerusalem!*

Three unforgettable women are at the heart of this thrilling novel. A young woman whose husband dumps her in a Paris café; a mother who vanishes for long hours every day, and her daughter doesn't know where she is; and a mysterious woman who has abandoned her newborn baby on the doorstep of a convent on a snowy night in Jerusalem. They are the keys to a volcanic tale that takes us to the alleyways of the Latin Quarter in Paris, to Tel Aviv of the 1970s, and links pre-1948 Jerusalem under the British Mandate with a picturesque village in England. In these places, the three women seek their identities and their mysterious past. And as each one faces upheavals in her life, the narrative masterfully ties the three together, striking chords of love and hate, of heartbreak, blood and tears.

Foreign rights sold: German, **Aufbau**, Berlin.

**Sarit Yishai-Levi** was born in Jerusalem in 1947 to a Sephardic family that has lived in the city for seven generations. She studied at the Nissan Nativ Acting Studio and later at Tel Aviv University. Before turning to journalism, Yishai-Levi acted in theater and film for several years. Later, she was a correspondent for various Israeli newspapers and magazines, including *At*, *Monitin*, *Ha'Olam Ha'Zeb* and *Hadasbot*; she also hosted Hebrew TV and radio programs in Los Angeles. At present, she is a senior correspondent for *Olam Ha'Isba* magazine and hosts TV shows on tourism and lifestyle. Yishai-Levi has published four non-fiction books. Her first novel, *The Beauty Queen of Jerusalem*, an outstanding bestseller in Israel, received the Publishers Association's Gold and Platinum Prizes (2014) and the Steimatzy Prize for bestselling book of the year (2014). It is now being made into a feature film. The book has been published in English (**St. Martin's Press**), German (**Aufbau**), Italian (**Sonzogno**), Turkish (**Koton**) and Russian (**Knizhniki**).

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PHOTO © ELAD DAVID, COURTESY OLAM HAISHA MAGAZINE

Yishai-Levi excels in reviving the past with historical accuracy and has built an interesting connection between her books.

**Haaretz**

*A Woman Beyond the Sea* gives us everything we need to immerse ourselves into a book: love, hate, courage, and also wonderful yarns.

**At Magazine**

A wonderful book.

**Channel Bet radio**

An enchanting book, powerful and profound.

**Booklovers Reading Club**

A book that swept me away.

**Treasury of Words blog**

Moving and powerful.

**Book Parliament blog**

# Yirmi Pinkus

## *Bachelors and Widows*

a novel

Ben Shemen, Keter, 2017. 239 pp.



In this book the protagonists, all bachelors and widows, drift along in their own concentric circles of loneliness. Each one leads his or her life through a series of personal ceremonies while dreaming of a different life—until the moment their routine is shattered, and new, strange and thrilling possibilities burst into their lives. The tragi-comic carnival atmosphere of the four novellas are characteristic of Pinkus's prose—a style that has brought him unique status in Hebrew literature as one of the best-loved and best-selling writers of his generation.

**Yirmi Pinkus**, born in Tel Aviv in 1966, is an illustrator, novelist and graphic artist. He has won the Sapir Prize for Debut Novel, the Prime Minister's Award for Literature and he was shortlisted for the French Prix Ulysse. Since 2000, he has taught illustration and scriptwriting for comics and animation at Shenkar College. His previous works have been adapted for theater and published in Italian (**Cargo**), French (**Grasset**), English (**Syracuse Press**, **Fantagraphics**) and German (**Avant Verlag**).

Pinkus's novel *Professor Fabrikant's Historical Cabaret* has been published in Italian and in French; *A Petty Business* has been published in English.

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PHOTO © MOR BERENSTEIN

Pinkus writes like a magician, with a wonderful eye for the nuances of human behavior.... Through his eyes, even the pettiest and ugliest suddenly seem amusing, poignant and even lovable.

**Ha'aretz**

Best book of the year!

**Ha'aretz**



## *Professor Fabrikant's Historical Cabaret*

a novel

Tel Aviv, Am Oved, 2008. 303 pp.

Czernowitz, Romania, 1937. Professor Fabrikant, an elderly Jewish impresario and scion of a family of rich industrialists, passes away. He bequeaths his fortune in diamonds and his theater troupe, comprising seven aging actresses—"The Historical Cabaret of Professor Fabrikant"—to the black sheep of the family, his 26-year-old nephew Herman. Herman takes the management of the cabaret into his own hands and sets off with the all-female troupe.

Her plan frustrated, his mother, the vengeful Zofia Fabrikant, swears to ruin the cabaret, to bring her son home and to wrest from him control of the fortune.

The actresses quickly become an attraction in the streets of Romania, Poland and Hungary. Their colorful personalities, their confrontations and alliances, and the way in which each of them comes face to face with reality, make for numerous comic situations. The reader is won over by the rich and sensual world of the women's adventures and the people they meet during their travels.

The refreshing idea of writing a book that is, in its entirety, an ode to cultural life, leisure time, and entertainment... this book by Pinkus does not apologize for being entertaining and amusing – on the contrary. He treats the historical cabaret and his cast of elderly female actresses with all the respect that they deserve, as he negotiates Israeli culture's search for normalcy.

**YNET**

Yirmi Pinkus uses rich, clever and picturesque language. The tale has an amusing tone to it, and an abundance of comical situations and colorful characters.

**Haaretz**



## *Petty Business*

a novel

Tel Aviv, Am Oved, 2012. 310 pp.

A tragi-comic novel that tells the story of two middle-aged sisters in Tel Aviv: Tzippi the extravagant fashion show producer, and pessimistic, introverted Dvora, who owns a failing perfume shop and cares for her intellectually disabled younger sister Bina.

The two sisters dream of taking a family vacation with their husbands, their grown children, and even their elderly aunt to Seefeld, an Alpine town which they imagine as a hotbed of fantastic luxury. It is 1989, and trips abroad are still rare and expensive. Affluent Tzippi suggests that her impoverished sister, who has not been abroad since her honeymoon, opens a clothing stall to sell *schmattes* at fairs and water parks. The action shifts from middle class Tel Aviv to the hectic water park and the colorful figures who populate it, including both peddlers and vacationers. The *schmattes* business is successful, but as the end of the summer draws near, the family members find themselves caught up in a web of intrigue and desire. The comic veneer is gradually stripped away to reveal an irreparable sadness.

Yirmi Pinkus is a gifted writer. His words evoke sounds and smells, and memories that I was never aware of before.

**Mako**

I had a feeling of delight while reading this book... What a celebration: unrestrained, ironic and very funny. It has been a long time since I read a book that so overwhelmed me into uncontrollable fits of laughter. It manages to both entertain and to profoundly stir the emotions. When I finished reading it, I was left with a broad grin on my face that wouldn't go away.

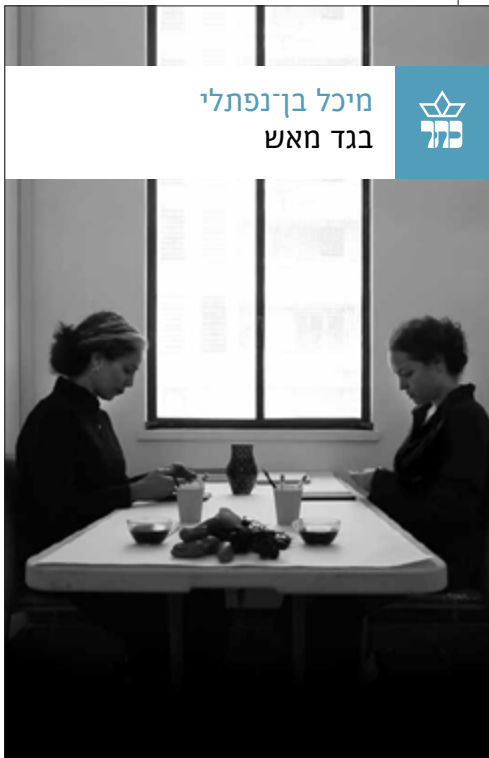
**Haaretz**

# Michal Ben-Naftali

## *A Dress of Fire*

two novellas

Ben Shemen, Keter, 2019. 176 pp.



**Michal Ben-Naftali** was born in Tel Aviv in 1963. A writer, translator and editor, she studied history and philosophy at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem and received her PhD in contemporary French philosophy from Oxford University.

Ben-Naftali lived in Paris for several years; she was the editor of a French series for Hakibbutz Hameuchad Publishers, followed by a series on Hebrew aesthetics for Resling. She teaches French literature and creative writing at Tel Aviv University. Ben-Naftali has published collections of essays, a novella, a memoir and a novel, as well as many academic articles. Her translations from French to Hebrew include Jacques Derrida, Marina Tsvetaeva, Julia Kristeva. In 2008, she received a translation scholarship from the French Ministry of Culture, and in 2013 she was writer-in-residence at the Helsinki Collegium for Advanced Studies.

Ben-Naftali has received the Prime Minister's Prize (2007), the *Haaretz* prize for Best Literary Essay of the Year (2008) and the Sapir Prize (2016). Her novel *The Teacher* was published in French (*Actes Sud*), English (*Open Letter*), Italian (*Mondadori*), Russian (*Knizhniki*), Arabic (*Kul Shee*).

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**A** Jerusalem student is hired to read aloud to a charismatic woman who is losing her eyesight, and she falls under her spell. The murky intimacy that grows between the two will, ironically, lead a person who is sharing her own vision with another into the depths of darkness, from which it seems doubtful that she will ever escape.

In a second story, a woman voluntarily hospitalizes herself together with her demented mother, taking her mother's seclusion upon herself. Gradually she dissolves her own self into oblivion that was ever in its essence.

The two novellas in this new and stirring book by Michal Ben-Naftali each present a story about love between women. Like the characters, the two novellas borrow light and darkness, power and secrets, from one another. They each tell of a departure from one story, which is suffocatingly depicted, and a secretive entry into another story, someone else's; into lives whose receding significance is captured by the strength of devotion.

Ben-Naftali's story is one of a breakdown, but one that is described in such clear and delightful prose, and with such understanding and sensitivity, that the reader is left with a sense of beauty and pleasure.

**Haaretz**

The novella *A Dress of Fire*, whose title is taken from a poem by Dahlia Ravikovitch, overflows with the act of reading Proust, Descartes, Borges, Marguerite Duras and others. Ben-Naftali absorbs references and quotations into her own dizzying whirlpool and makes them hers, as they contribute strength and colour to her narrative.

**Orit Neumayer Potashnik**

A complex and beautiful book.

**Guy Pearl**

It is precisely when Ben-Naftali touches the depths of pain that she soars to the heights of beauty.

**Keren Dotan**



PHOTO © ABRAHAM BEN-NAFTALI



## *Esther and Adina*

a novel

Tel Aviv, Achuzat Bayit, 2019.  
247 pp.

**E**sther and Adina are unforgettable characters: audacious, funny and inquisitive. Both deviate suddenly from the steady course of the lives they have built for themselves and are compelled to act in unsettling ways. Each has a grownup child who has left home, and perhaps this is why they try to get a new grip on life. Their searches lead to situations that are sometimes comical, sometimes embarrassing and at other times full of goodness and intimacy.

The novella bearing Esther's name comprises three letters in which she explains candidly to her only son, what has happened to her in recent years. In letters abounding in self-deprecating humor, practical wisdom and subtle irony she describes adventures that are not usually shared with one's children, and reflects upon the role of their mother-son relationship, evoking in the reader the picture of a mischievous, life-loving character.

Adina is an accountant by profession. What others see as pettiness and narrow-mindedness are to her mind precision and honesty. One day, out of her uncompromising striving for the truth, she crosses a line, causing harm both to herself and others. She goes into temporary exile in Hamburg, and while there, encounters that show her how the truth can be interpreted in different ways lead her to do some incisive soul-searching.

What captures the reader is the voice that is totally different... Albalach once again emerges as an original and highly talented writer.

**Haaretz**

Albalach is steadily establishing herself as a gifted Israeli writer of prose.

**Yedioth Aharonoth**



## *The Old Man (Farewell)*

a novella

Tel Aviv, Hakibbutz Hameuchad, 2018. 118 pp.

**A** daughter accompanies her father in the last months of his life. She watches as he becomes ever more confused, and wishes to preserve something of his personality, as it disappears before her eyes. The more he forgets, she remembers; the further he drifts away, she senses a new closeness between them; and as her father's hold on life is loosened, its meaning is revealed to her.

In clear and lyrical prose Noga Albalach draws a portrait of her father, tells his life story and examines the relationship between them. Through memories and tragicomic everyday moments, poetic in a mundane way, Albalach pieces together a lively portrait of a brave and humble man and the painful process of watching him slowly disappear. His life, illness and death shed a new life on the daughter's life and bring new insights.

*The Old Man (Farewell)*, a story about one man, is actually about every man, every parent and child, every family affected by the inevitable passing of time, by illness and death.

ENGLISH TRANSLATION AVAILABLE

This book is, to my mind, a masterpiece.

**Author Dror Burstein**

A beautiful and minimalist distillation of the existential absurdity of human life, which chokes the throat as it is read.

**Haaretz**

**Noga Albalach** was born in Petach Tikva, Israel, in 1971 and now lives in Tel Aviv. She received an MA in economics from Tel Aviv University and worked for several years as an equity analyst. In 2005, she left this field and started studying literature. She received her MA in literature from Tel Aviv University and at present works as a literary editor. Albalach has published a novel, collections of short stories and novellas as well as books for children. She has been awarded the Minister of Culture Prize for Debut Literature (2011) and the Prime Minister's Prize (2016). Her novella *The Old Man* will be published in French by **éditions do**, Bordeaux.

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PHOTO © TAL MOLCHO



# Shifra Horn

## *Daughters of Jerusalem*

[working title]

a novel

Tel Aviv, Kinneret Zmora-Bitan Dvir, forthcoming. 250 pp.

Born in Jerusalem, **Shifra Horn** holds a BA in biblical studies, archeology and communications. She has worked as spokesperson for the Ministry of Absorption; also as a journalist, lecturer and TV host. Later she managed her own independent public relations firm. She has published five bestselling novels, a collection of short stories, non-fiction and books for children. In 2002, Horn was nominated Literary Woman of the Year by the Israeli financial daily, *Globes*. She has also been awarded the WIZO Prize (1997), the Book Publishers Association's Gold and Platinum Prizes, the ADAI-WIZO Prize (Italy, 2006), the Brenner Prize (2006), the French WIZO Prize (2008) and the Minister of Culture's Zionism Prize for *Scorpion Dance (Promenade à Deux)* (2014). Horn's books have been published in eight languages, among which English (**St Martin's Press, Piatkus**), French (**Fayard**), Italian (**Fazi**), German (**Bertelsman, btb**), Dutch (**Archipel/ Arbeiderspers**).

By the author of the unforgettable worldwide bestseller *Four Mothers!*

Alexandra sits in a room facing the timeless beauty of the Jerusalem hills. She is writing her family's history, inspired by the house in which they all lived, now a residence for artists and writers. Alexandra's family have lived in the city for over a hundred years, but there is so much she doesn't know about them. Where is her father? Only one dim memory—a photo of a little girl presenting flowers to an elegantly dressed young man.

Generations of women will reconnect and bond via the winding tales that follow. Alexandra turns to her grandmother Eduarda, the bearer of family memories. The old woman tells her fascinating life stories, and identifies the photo—the little girl is Alexandra's great-grandmother Victoria, the young man Prince Edward, son of Queen Victoria and the future king of England, who visited Jerusalem in 1862. Years later in London, the two will meet again, with unexpected consequences...

In an extraordinary story that leads back to the Crimean War of 1853, then forward to shocking details about her parents and the tragic circumstances of her own birth, Alexandra gathers up her past. And Jerusalem, with all the political and religious conflicts that have divided this complicated city, is an inseparable part of the novel.

This book walks a fine line between imagination and reality; the real and mythical characters and their mutual relationships, are depicted against an accurate historical backdrop of the city of Jerusalem.

No reviews available yet.  
For *Four Mothers*:

Poignant, earthy and engaging.  
**Daily Telegraph**

A rich and magical tale.  
**The Bookseller**

A novel that is palpable...filled with voices and suggestiveness.  
**La Stampa**

[Amidst] Jerusalem's residential neighborhoods, [Horn's] characters are epic heroines.  
**Publishers Weekly**

A lively, reader friendly tale effectively flavored with atmospheric detail and fascinating chunks of Israeli folklore and myth.  
**Kirkus Reviews**



PHOTO © DAN FORGES

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# Itamar Levy

## *Until I Was Born*

a novel

Hevel Modi'in, Kinneret, Zmora-Bitan, Dvir, 2019. 192 pp.



The novel *Until I Was Born* is written in the form of a family biography. It relates the stories of two Jewish families, one from Turkey and one from Poland, stories that intertwine and blend. The narrator is Itamar Levy, an offspring of these commingled clans—a representation of the writer himself. As in some of his previous novels, Levy deals with the vicissitudes of Jewish and Israeli fate. In a style reminiscent of the finest storytellers, he blends historical facts, imaginary convolutions and family myths, to create a wondrous alternative tale that is full of both drama and humor.

**Itamar Levy** was born in Tel Aviv in 1956, and studied theater at Tel Aviv University. He is a novelist and playwright and also writes radio scripts. Levy lives in Moshav Tzrufa; he owns a second-hand book store in Haifa and a website, 'Itamar's Bookstore'. *Until I Was Born* is his seventh book, not including a memoir (2000). His most notable novels are *Zelig Mainz and His Longings for Death*, *The Legend of the Sad Lakes* and *Letters of the Sun, Letters of the Moon*. Levy received the Prime Minister's Prize for Hebrew Literature in 1992.

Levy's books have been published in French (**Liana Levi, Actes Sud**), German (**Suhrkamp, Conte**), Italian (**Bompiani**), Spanish (**Circulo de Lectores**).

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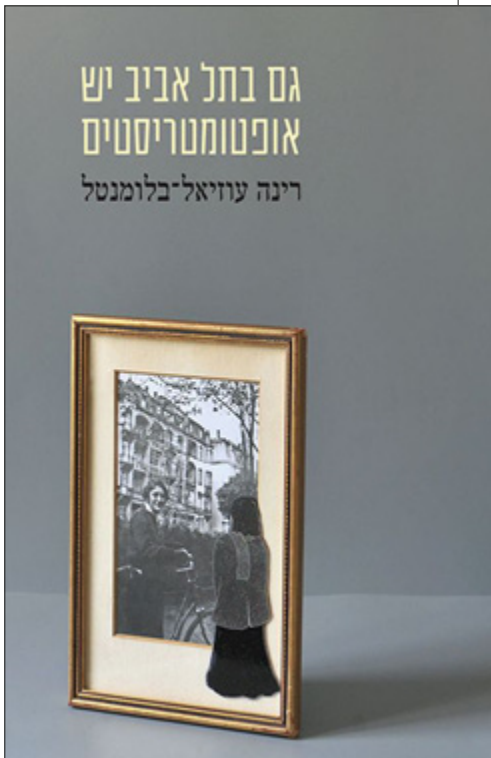
PHOTO © MOSHE SHAI

A graceful novel that maintains a playful spirit. The novel hosts unexpected guests.

**Benny Ziffer, Haaretz**

The book is a love song: it demonstrates great love for the written word; great love for the family; and a great ability and gift for telling a story.

**Iris Ganor, Greek Goddess blog**



## *There Are Also Optometrists in Tel Aviv*

a novel

Jerusalem, Carmel Publishing House, 2018. 228 pp.

This book portrays the lives and fates of German Jews during the period of the Nazis' rise to power. The plot follows Ruth and Ernst, a married couple who manage to escape to Palestine before the outbreak of World War II. It describes their life in Tel Aviv in the 1930s, and the lives of their relatives who are still in Germany, with all the hardships that they face, as well as their thoughts on personal identity and its strong connection to their home country and its history.

The novel deftly embeds its story within the German-Jewish context and refers to historical events, dates and documents while telling the personal story of Ruth and Ernst, their son Ilan and his family.

**Rina Ouziel-Blumenthal** was born in Tel Aviv. She holds a BA in theater and Hebrew literature from Tel Aviv University and also completed studies in creative education. Ouziel-Blumenthal was an actress for many years, and performed with the Cameri Theater as well as with a number of experimental theater groups. She also participated in a project using acting therapy for children with special needs. Over the years, she has published short stories in literary journals such as *Proza*, *Iton 77* and *Moznayim*. In 2001, she won the ACUM Gold Quill Prize for her novel *Invention, Memory*, which has been published in Greek (**Exanadas**, Athens).

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In this novel, Blumenthal's talent reaches an impressive and particularly moving peak... A candid portrayal of the problems encountered by *Yekkes* (German Jews) in this country...and their ambivalence towards it.

**Prof. Moshe Zimmerman,**  
Hebrew University of  
Jerusalem

In her beautiful, flowing prose Blumenthal paints a broad, multilayered canvas, encompassing the memory and history...of this unique wave of immigrants.

**Dr. Rachel Livneh-Freudenthal,**  
Leo Baeck  
Institute

# Michal Sapir

## *The Modern Dance*

a novel

Hevel Modi'in, Kinneret, Zmora-Bitan, Dvir, 2018. 304 pp.



**T**he *Modern Dance* revolves around Berlin and Tel Aviv in 1929 and 1930, fateful years in the history of the 20th century, and in the history of Jewish artists in Europe and Israel. The book is written in a way that is reminiscent of the sampling technique in music: In each of the five chapters, Sapir uses the writing of a prominent author who was active during that dramatic time—Maurice Merleau-Ponty, David Vogel, Walter Benjamin, Alfred Döblin and Leah Goldberg—and writes in their styles stories that they did not write, but perhaps could have written. Linking the stories, like Ariadne's thread, is the figure of the German-Jewish dancer Valeska Gert who choreographed solo works and collaborated with avant-garde artists.

**Michal Sapir**, born in New York in 1966, is a writer, translator and musician. She has a PhD in comparative literature from New York University. In 2011 she published a biography of her grandfather, the legendary Israeli finance minister Pinchas Sapir. Among her notable translations: Georges Didi-Huberman's *Survivance des lucioles*, Zygmunt Bauman's *Culture in a Liquid Modern World*, Prof. Yigal Schwartz's *The Zionist Paradox: Hebrew Literature and Israeli Identity*. Michal is also the songwriter, singer and guitarist in the band Afor Gashum. *The Modern Dance* is her first novel.

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PHOTO © TALU SHAMIR

A rare literary and intellectual pleasure, a new kind of beauty.

**Haaretz**

This book invites us to...think ourselves into the bodies and minds of those who have no place or language of their own, or who feel alien to [them]...it makes us identify with alternative cultural histories...A breathtaking linguistic monument.

**Prof. Yigal Schwartz**

## Oren Gazit

*The First End and the Second End*

a novel

Hevel Modi'in, Kinneret, Zmora, Dvir, 2019. 239 pp.



**Oren Gazit** was born in Ramat Gan in 1971. He served as a military correspondent and editor for the Army newspaper, *Bamabaneb*, and later as a journalist for the weekend supplement of the daily *Maariv*.

Gazit has held a number of different positions in Israeli television, including showrunner of primetime productions. He set up and edited the first Israeli version of *The Tonight Show* to be aired on cable TV, *Yatzpan*. For the past seven years he has directed the documentary and docu-reality department for the commercial Channel 13 network. He is a single parent to twins, a boy and a girl.

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“For a long time, I couldn’t write about that evening, about the memory that challenged me in those hours of darkness. There were many who were surprised that I, the national songwriter, two of whose plays were included in the national treasury of Israel in a law enacted only a year ago, had not written about what happened that night.”

The plot of *The First End and the Second End* unfolds in one dramatic night, set in the very near future. Four characters, all highly temperamental and animated, find themselves trapped in the home of Avraham, a playwright and lyricist favored by the establishment, as a terrorist roves menacingly around the well-off neighborhood of Tel Aviv where he lives. Avraham’s daughter Dana is wheelchair-bound after what may have been a suicide attempt; her rather odd mother-in-law Maggie, looks exactly like the actress Maggie Smith, and Dalya is an amusing former actress, a friend of the family, and a lover.

The four characters both love and can’t stand one another. On this night, they confront everything that for years they have been trying to hide, even from themselves. Over them hovers the ghost of Adina, Avraham’s late wife, “the one who before her nothing existed” and who ties together the enormous love and pain felt by each one of them.

Under the framework of this night, Gazit takes a shrewd, cynical look—one that is both loving and compassionate—at the world we live in, and a satirical, somewhat comical, look at a future that is neither entirely a threat nor unrealistic.



PHOTO © TZACHI ZELNIKER

Gazit has something to say... In his first book he depicts a significant crisis of values and shows a political and emotional daring that is rare in our neighborhood.

**Haaretz**

The book is like a challenging cross-country race where satisfaction and difficulty are bound together. If you invest the time, you will enjoy the course.

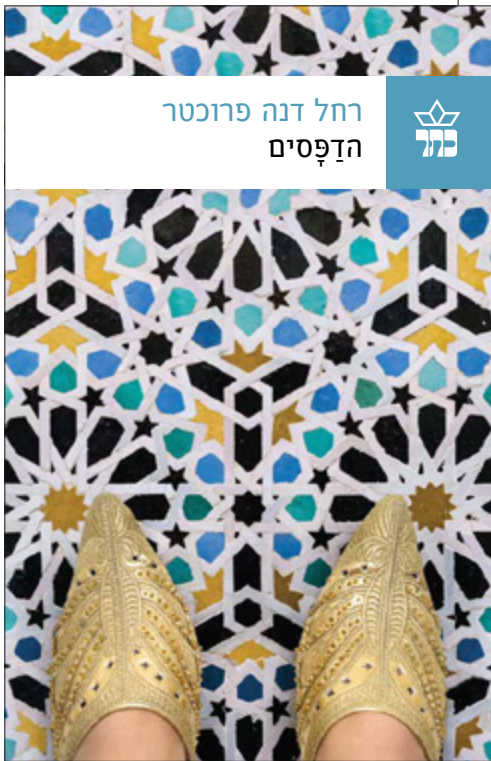
**Saloon**

# Rachel Dana Fruchter

## *The Printers*

a novel

Ben Shemen, Keter, 2019. 256 pp.



**Rachel Dana Fruchter** was born in 1956 in Tel Aviv into a Sephardi family originating in Istanbul and lives in Jerusalem today. Fruchter studied literature, philosophy and theater at Tel Aviv University. She received a student scholarship from the Centre de Formation des Journalistes and holds a teaching certificate from the Kerem Institute for Teacher Training.

Fruchter worked as a news editor for *Haaretz* and as a copy editor for *Al HaMishmar* and *Hadasbot*, where she also wrote literary and cultural pieces. She was a TV production researcher for The First Channel's literary programs and has taught literature, philosophy and creative writing at the Hebrew University Secondary School.

Fruchter has published poems and short stories in literary magazines and in the cultural supplements of Israeli newspapers. Her first book of poetry, *The Painful Beauty of the Morning* (2007) was published by Carmel Publishing House. Her first novel, *The Printers* (2019), is a part of Keter Books' belletristic series *Hasidra LeSifrut Yafa*.

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In the Bechar family everything begins with dreams. Grandma Nonna Bechar's dreams in Istanbul in which she peeled the world like a giant quince; those of her son Maurice who walked all the way from Istanbul to Israel and opened a printing shop there; the dreams of Uncle Yuda, the poet who translates *Don Quixote*, but publishes nothing; and also the dreams of Anna, an artist who sketches the faces of all the family and who is loyal and loving but who may be the end of it all. The family printing shop is at the heart of this novel, and the lives of all the characters flow into it, whether they adore it or despise its very existence.

*The Printers* traverses time and place, from Istanbul to Tel Aviv, Paris to Jerusalem. This is a novel about a family, but also about individuals: Intellectuals who believe in dreams, Hebrew language fanatics who yearn for Ladino, the Judeo-Spanish language that is all but forgotten. It is a novel about the possibility of continuity and about lives that are cut short. A realist novel, in which dreams, imagination and proverbs play a key role.

*The Printers* is a story about a lost world and about a deep love for books, words, and the letters of the Hebrew alphabet.



PHOTO © GALY BORMAN

We long for quality literature, and this book has satisfied our hunger. It is a depiction of emotions and references from various points of view. A song of love for printing and for books.

**Uri Ra'anana, Simania Blog**

A book for book lovers, people who love the printed word and who love a good story. The characters touch one's heart.

**Saloon**

## Yael Shaham

*The Editor*

a novel

Ben Shemen, Keter, 2018. 287 pp.



**Yael Shaham** was born in Tivon, a suburb of Haifa, in 1957. She grew up in Haifa, graduating from the Re'ali High School. She is the mother of four children and lives in Tel Aviv.

For 25 years Shaham worked as an editor of books and magazines for the financial newspaper *Globes*. In recent years she has developed a documentary series entitled *The History of the Middle Class*.

*The Editor* is Yael Shaham's first novel and she is currently working on her second.

*The Editor* portrays a woman in an era when men are falling apart. A magazine editor who insists on saying whatever she thinks, even when it is unnecessary. A woman who is trying to manage her magazine, her home, her life as a divorcee and her love life and, most of all, to keep her head above water while the waves toss her about without mercy. Although she has already achieved everything that was expected of her—especially by her mother—she feels empty-handed. She's a woman who has always walked a slightly crooked path, yet has somehow, shrewdly, managed to see straight ahead. And perhaps this is also what love looks like to her. Perhaps not.

*The Editor* is a funny and painful novel that is biting and razor sharp. It is written in prose that contrives to be both direct and convoluted. It tells the story of a disintegrating marriage but also of falling in love; of humanity, of cravings, of obsession and, most of all, of greed. It is a tale of female redemption set in the bustling workplace of an alternative culture magazine, and it is a trenchant statement on the direction that the Israeli media has taken.



PHOTO © TAMAR LEWINSOHN

A clever book.

**Yedioth Ahronoth**

A wise and entertaining book, at times disturbing, without ever being really murky.... Vibrant, cool, creative.

**7 Nights Weekend Magazine**

*The Editor*, just like Yael Shaham, is clever and funny...you never sense that a great deal of work has gone into it.

**Sheli Gross, HaMalbisha blog**

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# Elhanan Nir

## *Just the Two of Us*

a novel

Tel Aviv, Hakibbutz Hameuchad, 2017. 198 pp.



**Elhanan Nir** was born into a rabbinic family in Jerusalem in 1980 and was educated at various yeshivas. At a young age, he was exposed to secular art and literature and began to write poetry and short stories; he was even published in the daily press and in magazines, without his community's knowledge.

After his military service, he continued his religious studies and became a teacher at the Siach-Yitzhak Hesder Yeshiva. Since 2012, he also teaches at the Machanayim Hesder Yeshiva. In 2004, he founded the literary section of *Makor Rishon* and was its editor for seven years. Nir's books of poetry and Jewish thought have won, among others, the Wertheim Prize for Poetry (2008), the Ramat Gan Prize (2010), and the Prime Minister's Award (2011). *Just the Two of Us*, his first novel, won the Posen International Fellowship (2014) and the Ministry of Culture Award (2017).

Nir is married to Sarah and has four children. He lives in Jerusalem.

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**M**uch is expected of Yonatan Lehavi. He is a brilliant Torah scholar and a great future is foreseen for him. But like his father before him, he gives up this career for the woman he loves, Alyssa. He desires only to nurture his young marriage and overcome his misgivings about his faith. However, this fragile togetherness—the feeling of “just the two of us”—is threatened by his two brothers. One of them, Micha, suffers from manic attacks and manages to drag Yonatan into his deranged projects. The other, Iddo, who died of cancer in childhood, still casts a long shadow over the present. And over it all hovers his father whose life, he feels, predicts a bleak future. What is it that drives this two-generation story, with its paternal abandonment and the guilt that demands reparation? The book tosses its characters between a sense of simple coincidence in their suffering and the possibility that all is predestined by a contaminated heredity.

With sensitivity and power, Nir shapes a subject, a character, and a conflict that are rare in contemporary Israeli fiction. He depicts a hero torn between different worlds, growing up in the often conflicting shadows of militarism, religiosity, nationalism, and family.



PHOTO © MICHALFATTAL, COURTESY POETRY PLACE LITERARY ORGANIZATION

A fine book, aesthetic and decidedly impressive.

**Haaretz**

Nir presents a number of lifelike and original characters.

**Literary critic Arik Glasner**





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**Tali Latowicki** • *The Right to Bodily Integrity*

**Orin Rosner** • *Wind Cubs*



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**Amir Gilboa** • *Selected Poems*

**Dori Manor** • *Selected Poems*

## Tuvia Ruebner

### *Still Before*

Jerusalem, Bialik Institute, 2017. 64 pp.

#### Moonlight

I know it is  
 Only a dream  
 And like a dream I will take wing  
 But this little hope  
 This silly little hope  
 Which does not cease  
 That in time you and I shall meet  
 On the dark side of the moon  
 Pain does not atone  
 For evil thoughts  
 And now night time and you are missing  
 Tomorrow will be day and you will be missing  
 Your wisdom is missing, your voice no longer here  
 Your love cries inside crying  
 But the day is not far and I shall be  
 Over and done with, the dream  
 Will be lasting dream  
 And you and I  
 On the other side of the moon  
 Will be with you and with me  
 And you with me  
 Forever, for all times  
 My son, my son

*Translated by Oded Manor © by the Estate of T. Ruebner*

Ruebner's poetry has been published in book form in English, German and Slovak. His poems have also been published in anthologies and periodicals in other languages.

**Tuvia Ruebner** (1924-2019) was born in Bratislava, Slovakia. He came to pre-state Israel in 1941 and joined Kibbutz Merhaviya. He was a professor of comparative literature at Haifa University, a member of the German Language and Literature Academy and of the Mainz Academy of Science and Literature. He published his first book of poetry in 1957 and published 13 more collections. He also published many academic studies. Ruebner was awarded, in Israel: the Anne Frank Prize, the Jerusalem Prize, the Prime Minister's Prize (twice) and the prestigious Israel Prize (2008); abroad he received the D. Steinberg Prize (Zurich, 1981), the Christian Wagner Prize (Germany, 1994), the Jeannette Schocken Prize (Germany, 1999), the Paul Celan Translation Prize (1999), the Jan Smrek Prize and the Theodore Kramer Prize (2008).

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## T. Carmi

### *Monologues and Other Poems*

Tel Aviv, Dvir, 1988. 89 pp.

#### Chess at the Seashore

A calm sea. The end of September.  
 Two old men play chess  
 At the seashore.  
 Like a hampered kite one hand  
 Hovers above the board.

Dusk on the shore.  
 It is hard to tell  
 white from black.  
 Whose turn is it?  
 It is hard to master  
 the rules of the game.

The pervading aroma of barbecue;  
 grilled meats on the shore.  
 A mechanical pigeon,  
 white as the man's bristles,  
 lands, exhausted,  
 on the warm sand.

The next move:  
 rewind the spring,  
 fly the pigeon  
 before it gets dark;  
 take the Queen  
 with a drooping hand.

*Translated by Tsipi Keller. Reprinted with permission from 'Poets on the Edge: An Anthology of Contemporary Hebrew Poetry' (State University of New York Press, 2008). (c) 2008 State University of New York. All Rights Reserved.*

T. Carmi's poetry has been published in book form in English, French and German. His poems have also been published in anthologies and periodicals in other languages.

**T. Carmi** (Carmi Charny) (1925-1994) was born in New York and was brought up in one of the few Hebrew-speaking American households. His first Hebrew poems were published while he still lived in the U.S. He studied at Yeshiva and Columbia Universities, and in 1946 worked with Jewish war orphans in France. He immigrated to Eretz Israel in 1947 and settled in Jerusalem after fighting in the War of Independence. An editor and translator (of Shakespeare, among others), he was a regular visiting professor at Hebrew Union College in Jerusalem. In addition to publishing his own poetry, he was editor and translator of two books of Hebrew poetry, including *The Penguin Book of Hebrew Verse*. Carmi was awarded numerous literary prizes, including the Shlonsky Prize (1958), the Brenner Prize (1972), the Neuman Prize (1982), a Guggenheim Fellowship Award (1987) and the Bialik Prize (1990).

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## Sharon Hass

### *Music of the Wide Lane*

Ramat Gan, Afik, 2015. 88 pp.

**Sharon Hass** was born in Ramat Gan in 1966. Hass is a poet and an essayist and has a BA in classics and an MA in religious studies from Tel Aviv University. She has taught literature and philosophy at Tel Aviv University and at Camera Obscura Art School and she runs poetry and prose workshops for children and adults. She has published six volumes of poems, has participated in several international poetry festivals and in poetry events in Israel. Hass's awards include the Hezy Leskly Award, the Prime Minister's Award and the Debut Prize from the Israel Council for Culture and Art. She lives in Tel Aviv.

This book of verse digs deeper, intrigues and moves the reader more than any other collection of poetry by Hass... it is an extraordinary achievement. Her verse abounds in painterly language, her Hebrew is beautiful and precise, and the imagery never seems arbitrary.... The language of Hass's poetry is taut, its wealth of imagery comes across as essential, and a certain humor has also emerged, fed by a new use of rhyming, that is both surprising and fascinating. The book offers something that is innovative and refreshing, and not only when it is compared to Hass's impressive previous work.

**Riki Ophir, Haaretz**

It is one of the loveliest poetry collections to be published recently, if not the loveliest.

**Yitzhak Laor, Poetry, Haaretz**

## Orin Rosner

### *Wind Cubs*

Tel Aviv, Hakibbutz Hameuchad, 2019. 64 pp.

**Orin Rosner** was born in 1991 in Israel. She is a promising gifted young poet who has won the special award of the Minister of Culture for debut works. *Wind Cubs*, her first book, was published in 2019 to great acclaim.

In her first book of poetry, Orin Rosner tells of her fraught relationships with her mother, with her partner and with her psychotherapist. She touches frighteningly upon pain, presents a surprisingly fresh world of imagery, and offers us a rare reading experience. Evincing an undeniable talent, each line in this intriguing and exciting book grips the reader's heart. Most astonishing perhaps is that it comes from a young poet, still in her twenties. We eagerly await her next works.

**Haaretz**

## Tali Latowicki

### *The Right to Bodily Integrity*

Haifa, Pardes, 2019. 58 pp.

**Tali Latowicki** was born in 1976 and died in 2019 at the age of 42. Besides her recognition as a gifted poet, she was also a literary critic and editor. She studied literature and musicology at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, with a specialization at the Ben Gurion University of Beer Sheva, where she also taught Hebrew Literature. She published three volumes of poetry. Her awards include the Dov Sadan Award, the Avner Treinin Award and the special award of the Ministry of Culture for young poets. The volume: *The Right to Bodily Integrity* was published in 2019 posthumously.

Never to be blind to beauty, in spite of suffering; never to be oblivious to suffering, in spite of beauty. This is the task that Tali Latowicki took upon herself as a poet, whether struggling with sickness, diving into her personal life, or dealing with political issues. And it demands a voice that is both fierce and delicate, a language that is at once direct and filled with inventive metaphors, an approach that is equally unflinching and compassionate. In *The Right to Bodily Integrity* Latowicki carries out her task magnificently.

**Poet Shimon Adaf**

The unique beauty of Latowicki's poems originates in an interesting, even innovative, mixture of two traditions: on the one hand, there is unrequited love bursting with emotion and with no shame for its despair, on the other, a very reserved esthetic, filled with light and evading shadows. The result is sad, heart breaking poetry that behind its film noir paleness hides a deep and soft glow.

**Eli Hirsh, 7 Nights Weekend Magazine**